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PROPAGATION of SIKH THOUGHT

PART-I

S. MAHINDER SINGH 'JOSH' M.A.

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LUDHIANA

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(Part - I)

S. Mahinder Singh 'Josh', M.A.

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(Translated from original in Punjabi)

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STATE OF PREACHING DURING GURU PERIOD

A study of Sikh history reveals that the preaching methodology adopted by Guru *Sahiban* was so effective that it not only increased the number of Sikhs but also transformed the personality of the recipients of their sermon, making them more strong morally. 'Frighten not and Fear not' was the motto on which all preaching activities took place. This dictum helped spread *Gurmat* with impunity, which filled the people with fearlessness, ability to face death for the righteousness and inculcating in them an unshakable faith in their cause, so much so that Sikh religion has produced incomparable number of martyrs in its infancy. Despite being put to death by such gory ways like sawing into two, put into boiling water, removing of skull with sharp hoe or cut into pieces at every joint of their body; their faith in the principle of *Gurmat* never faltered. Their determination to keep their hair unshorn could never be shaken. They remained adherents of the Sikh code of conduct as was drafted, predicated and preached by Guru Sahibs. Despite witnessing pernicious death of Sikhs on the Christian wheels, it did not make an iota of difference in their belief. It did not even create a scare of any Tom, Dick or

Harry in the minds of the Sikhs. The Sikh religion was declared anti-rulers and to annihilate it, a price was put on the head of each Sikh. Those who held animosity against the Sikhs in their heart, started killing Sikhs deceitfully with a view to receive awards from the rulers. If a Sikh was handed over alive, the award was even more handsome. Yet no lover of *Gurmat* succumbed to such temptations. But how much successful were our Gurus in raising the number of Sikhs through preaching ? Our history seems to give airy-fairy views on the subject. A deep study of the history coupled with deliberate analysis would definitely bring out the truth that this great religion of *Satgurus* was adopted by the mankind, willingly and in good strength.

It is true that we have digressed our life style today from the laid down code of conduct and lofty character that the Sikhs were master of; our attitude of solemnly adhering to the *Gurmat* principles, too have suffered a set back and from the total population point of view, we are counted in the minority community. But the conditions had never been like this always. A study of history will reveal that the founders of other religions had never been so successful in preaching their ideology as Sikh Gurus had been. The followers of other religions propagated their faith after the death of its founder and used the all powerful machinery of the state rule in making their preachings effective than what could be achieved by founders themselves. In the case of Sikhs Gurus, the matter is just opposite.

During the period of the Ten Gurus, preaching of Sikh religion was very active. But after their demise, the Sikhs failed to maintain the tempo. In fact they could not even maintain that position where Gurus had taken Sikhism to. This state was the result of two factors, Firstly, the political environments were not conducive and secondly, due to our lack-a-daisical attitude towards preaching.

By his supreme and loving personality, Guru Nanak not only spread his dextrous and healthy religion during his life time in India but even reached it effectively in Asian and Middle East countries. The writers of other religions (Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Kadian) admit that Guru Nanak himself initiated over three crore people into the Sikh fold. The figures given by Bhai Gurdas Ji, a Sikh philosopher and scholar, are far more than this number. Such a high level religious preachings done by Satguru prove amply that Sikhism had the ability to spread in the world. It had the ability to attract people from every social segment of the world. If it is projected rightly to the people of the world today, it will most certainly find ready acceptance. The *Sangats* and *Dharamshalas* that Guru Nanak had established during his time, remained operative much after his departure from this world. The respect and devotion that the people of trans Himalayan region (Tibet and Ladakh) hold for Guru Nanak even today, are witness to the preaching done in those years. Wherever he went, he established *Sangat* and appointed a person of noble

character and preaching ability as the incharge and responsible for further spread of the ideology around.

In the later years of his life, Guru Ji raised an ideal Sikh township and a preaching centre by the name of Kartarpur on the right bank of river Ravi.

Guru Angad Dev Ji too appointed many capable and authentic noble souls on the task of preaching. He made **Khadur Sahib** as his preaching centre. The use of *Gurmukhi* script was encouraged here. He got Punjabi primers written for the children. For the spread of *Gurbani*, he used *Gurbani* in the form of 'Mottos' to various centres of preaching. He even made an attempt to have Guru Nanak's history written.

Satguru Amar Das Ji organised the preaching of Sikh religion more deftly. By the order of Guru Angad Dev Ji, he raised a township of Sikh influence by the name of **Goindwal Sahib.** This became a major preaching centre of Sikhism. He divided the area of Sikh influence into twenty two segments. These were called *Manjis.* A preacher was appointed in each of them. Beside these twenty two *Manjis* he also established fifty *Peehrhas* – sub segments. These organisations were placed under the care of scholarly Sikh preachers who belonged to various castes and areas. These people possesed high character and devotion in Sikh faith. Guru Amardas Ji would often

go on preaching trips himself. People from various castes, clan and cults/religions started accepting Sikhism rapidly. Many Muslims who belonged to the ruling religious class, started coming into the Sikh folds. A Pathan by the name of Allah Yaar Khan, who became a devoted Sikh and his appointment as an incharge of a *Manji* as a preacher is very significant information for the students of Sikh preaching history. Muslims, like Baba Allah Yaar Khan could not have become Sikh by themselves but were influenced by some Sikhs preachers who managed to convey the truth to them. These Muslim preachers also became the cause of hatred for Sikhs in the hearts of narrow- minded Muslims and high caste Hindus who were unable to bear and accept mind sway of the Muslims. Intoxicated by the power of ruling, they even started keeping hostile attitude towards the Sikhs. These narrow-minded Muslims and Hindus even resorted to back biting with the authorities of Lahore and Delhi against the Sikh *Satguru.* It amply proves that the preaching of Sikh religion was in full swing at that time. Goindwal became a famous Sikh preaching centre.

Guru Amardas Ji visited Kurukushetra and Hardawar on preaching mission and put the people on the road to true religion.

Guru Ramdas Ji did a yeoman's service in raising township of **Guru Ka Chak** (Chak Ramdaspur) which later took the shape of Amritsar city. Keeping the ideals

of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in mind, Guru Ramdas Ji developed it to become a great preaching centre of Sikhism. This city was also encouraging a new social order to develop on the basis of *Gurmat,* beside being a great centre of Sikhism. People of fifty two different professions were inhabited here. Thus it not only prospered and progressed in handicraft skill and commerce but also laid the foundation of such optimistic society which had no place for leisure seeking individuals. A project of economic well-being through industrious occupation was staring in the face which would raise a strong social structure free of wants and poverty. The social order was totally based on *Nâm Japo, Kirt Karo* and *Vand Chhako.* The society which was based on these practical religious principles, was free of economic oppression and high handedness to acquire wealth. Even the rich administrative machinery could not penetrate this social order to exploit gullible Sikhs. In fact Guru Ramdas Ji had organised the preaching systems of Sikhism in a very dextrous way. With the limited preachers and other resources loaded with ever increasing Sikh population, the effective management of preaching needed some more return and progressive steps. According to the need of the hour, Guru Ramdas Ji appointed Sikh religious preachers with wider powers of preaching. These were called *Masands.* Their appointment was to ensure spread of Guru Nanak's ideology uniformly and authentically. A person selected to become a *Masand* had to be a Gursikh of high and pure character, a scholar and well versed in *Gurmat,* with devotion and love for the spread of Sikhism.

The need of money for the spread of any ideology cannot be relegated over any other thing. Spreading of ideology world over require numerous means. The acquisition of these means is not possible without financial support. Financial resources must also be used judiciously. The number of devoted Sikhs had increased manyfold. Offerings, made by way of cash and kind had also increased. These had to be used in the preaching campaigns. People were too willing to put their might into these worthy causes. Guru Ramdas Ji took a far-sighted decision. Whereas devoted Sikhs were appointed for preaching, they were also entrusted with the task of collecting the offerings of the Sikhs of their area of jurisdiction and reach them to the *Guru Darbar* periodically to enable building up of Sikh institutions and further spread of *Gurmat.* All these efforts had cemented the relationship of the Sikhs with their central religious place and Guru. Thus with cooperation from all around, the preaching work was bound to progress significantly.

By the time of Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Sikhism had spread far and wide. This had caused much anguish amongst the high caste Hindus and they, along with staunch Muslims, started bearing grudge against the Sikhs since many of their brethren were coming voluntarily into the fold of Sikhism. These jealous and envious persons lodged a complaint with Emperor Akbar. They even fed him with wrong and inflated information that a voluminous book is being prepared by Guru Arjan Dev Ji which contained many derogatory

remarks about 'Quran', Hazrat Mohammad Sahib and Hindu gods and goddesses. Emperor Akbar was an open-minded person who believed in righteousness and justice. He himself came to Goindwal to meet Guru Arjun Dev Ji. During his stay there, he heard many hymns of *Gurbani* from the *Granth*. Thus he acquired information about the *Granth* contrary to what he had heard from the complainants. He was much pleased to hear the great words of divine wisdom. Akbar died in 1605 and in his place, his son Jahangir sat on the Delhi throne. He was a religious, fanatic and communal by nature. Added to these characteristics was his weakness to listen to the slanderers and back biters. One of many causes of the martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev Ji was the ever increasing popularity of Sikh way of life that had impressed many Hindus and Muslims; a good number of whom had joined Sikhism. The anger of fundamentalists against Sikhism is glaringly conspicuous in *Tuzak-i-Jahangiri* beside showing tremendous communal leaning of the new Emperor. He was virtually a puppet in the hands of *Nakshbandi* sect on matters religious. Sikhism was virtually offering the people solutions to their problems and the masses could sense fulfilment of their aspirations. A simple translation of what is found recorded in Tuzak-i-Jahangiri is as under –

> "A Hindu in the garb of *pir/faquir* named (Guru) Arjan was residing in a town named Goindwal, located on the bank of river Beas. He had brought many gullible Hindus and foolish Muslims in his

religious fold with his sermons and glib talk. People carried much faith in his method of propagating God and they would also praise him and his nearness to God. They used to call him Guru. Licentious and cheaters from all corners would come and assemble around him and held him in great faith and confidence. This shop had been in operation for the last three-four generations. For a time, a thought had been coming into my mind that either this shop of falsehood be closed or bring all of them into the fold of Islam."

In the life sketch of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, we find mention of *Sangats* of far places. Bhai Santokha Ji was a member of the *Sangat* of Peshawar. It was the *Sangat* of Peshawar who had extended their financial support for bricklining the water reservoir **Santokhsar** at Amritsar. *Sangat* of far off places and *Masands* used to throng Amritsar on first day of Baisakh with all their offerings and collections respectively and would pay their respect to Satguru Ji. Mention of Kabul *Sangat* and of other places is also found in the Sikh history.

By the time of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, it had become evident that Sikh community will emerge as a nation with a definite plan, policy and prosperity in the near future. For a strong organisation of Sikhs, for their spiritual, social prosperity and for generating and maintaining uniformity in their religious, spiritual and social approach,

and to instil unflinching faith and trust on the principles of Sikhism, Guru Arjan Dev Ji collected and compiled divine words of Bhagats of *Nirgun* School of thoughts and gave it an honourable place along with his own *bani* and that of his predecessor Gurus in the form of eternal, light dispensing Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Beside the small preaching centres, there was a need of some main centres. In 1588, he got Harimandir Sahib constructed in the middle of Amrit Sarovar. In 1604, once the compilation of *Granth* had been completed, it was installed in Sri Harimandir Sahib and its service was entrusted to grand old *Brahmgyani* of Sikhism – Baba Budha Ji. Since then this place is not only a preaching centre but is counted amongst the leading *Gurudwaras* of Sikhs. In 1590, a *Gurudwara* and a *Sarovar* was established at Taran Taaran which also became a leading preaching centre. Beside preaching of Sikh ideology, this holy place provided sanctuary and treatment for lepers. This was the first institution of its kind in whole of India though many such institutions are existing in India today.

The tradition of financial contributions for religious purpose had taken firm roots amongst the Sikhs. Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji named it *'Daswandh'* (One tenth of the income). He further strengthened the system of contribution of *Daswandh* through *Masands* and its use for purposeful welfare projects. Thus *Masands* were instructed to present themselves along with the *Sangat* of the area on

first day of Baisakh. (It falls on 13-14th April) This edict affected manyfold increase in the National Fund of the Sikhs. This also reduced the chance of frittering away of resources enroute.

There were two other reasons for speedy spread of Sikhism. Firstly, its principles were so simple and attractive that one felt drawn to them. Secondly, these principles had been projected very effectively by Guru Sahib. Once during his preaching tour through *Doaba*, Guru Arjan Dev Ji reached Dallah. The congregation was well attended where Guru Ji performed *Kirtan* and gave sermons on Sikh way of life and receiving Lord's clemency. *Langar* was also organised for people coming from far off places. Where as *Langar* encouraged the sentiment of service amongst the Sikhs, it discarded the feelings of high-low caste, religious differences and arrogance of belonging to a higher race or country. Seeing the well organised *Langar* coupled with divine discourses, the Subedar of Jalandhar Nawab Azeem Khan was so much impressed that he requested Guru Arjan Dev Ji to open a preaching centre in *Doaba* to help population of the area learn true human behaviour. Thus acceding to Nawab Azeem Khan's request, Guru Ji laid the foundation stone of Kartarpur (Jalandhar) in 1593. This place became a great religious preaching centre. The seventh and ninth Guru Sahib also resided here in later time. Thus the incessant efforts of Guru Arjan Dev Ji for spreading the Sikh faith brought Sikhism on much firm footings.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji preached in *Majha* and *Doaba* area from 1590 to 1601. He organised many services for the draught and famine hit people of Punjab during this period.

Sikhism progressed much during the times of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib. During this period, Sikhs even started paying attention towards politics and governance. To spread the bravery, courageous, nature and National sentiments of the Sikhs, he established Sri Akal Takht Sahib in 1609. He well understood the fact that to spread the truth, religious people must also be vested with political power. In fact *Raj* and *Dharm* has very intimate relationship with each other. For good governance, righteous and men of principles are a must. Without them just and righteous rule devoted to the welfare of the masses is difficult to establish. Even the best of principles and religion cannot spread and propagated without support of the ruling authorities. It is natural to find such elements in a society who become obstacles in the propagation of righteousness because of their malevolence temperament and inhuman instincts. Without any reasons, they are not prepared to accept religious freedom. That is why perhaps many religions or ideologies which had very many definitely acceptable elements, became extinct due to the attitude of oppression by unrighteous elements. Thus for the continuous survival, prosperity and protection of religion, righteous and religious persons must strive to acquire ruling power or at least have an effective say in the governance.

Satguru Ji raised a righteous army of brave soldiers. He introduced *Nagara* (Drum), *Nishan* (Jhanda), weapons, horses and other implements in religion. It was preached amongst the Sikhs that they must settle all their discords and disputes amongst themselves or at best bring it to Sri Akal Takht instead of taking them to the rulers court. In the beginning, Sikhs did not enjoy good rapport with King Jahangir but later on he realised his mistake and adopted such a good attitude that he developed a healthy respect for Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib. He even handed over the culprits of Guru's house and a prime culprits of the Sikhs, Chandu Shah, who had perpetrated great atrocities on Guru Arjan Dev Ji. After Satguru's release from Gawalior in 1614, King Jahangir did not interfere in the preaching and propagation of Sikhism. In the later period Guru Ji spent extensive efforts in propagation of Sikh religion.

He went out of Punjab to spread the gospel of Guru Nanak. He went to Kashmir via, Lahore, Gujranwala Wazirabad and Bhimber and attached many Hindus and Muslims with the true religion. Capable Sikhs were entrusted with the task of propagating and preaching Sikhism. On his way out from Kashmir, he preached Sikhism at Baramulla, Gujarat, Wazirabad, Bhai Ke Matto and Hafizabad. He came back to Amritsar via Nankana Sahib. He made a successful preaching tour of *Malwa* beside spreading Sikhism in Nalagarh, Doon and other hill states. The ancestors of Sikh rulers of Nabha, Jind and

Patiala had accepted Sikhism during this period. He visited Pilibhit and Nanak Mata of Uttar Pardesh in 1631-32 for preaching Sikhism.

Emperor Jahangir died in 1627 and his son Shahjahan sat on the throne. He prohibited Muslims to go into other religions and he even raised obstacles in the preaching those religions who were enticing others to join them. In fact Shahjahan and his other fundamentalist counsellors were not prepared to tolerate any Muslim converting into Sikhism. So much so that Kaulan, the daughter of Rustam Khan, Quazi of Lahore had adopted Sikh religion much against the wishes of her father. The adherents of *Sharah* and other fundamentalists were not prepared to tolerate and live with the conversion. Her father was bent upon finishing her life. But he could not do so because Guru Ji had taken her in his refuge. For such like reasons, the Sikhs had to indulge in battles with Moghuls from 1628 to 1634. Before his involvement in these battles, Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib handed over the duties of preaching Sikhism to his able and capable son Baba Gurditta Ji. Baba Sri Chand Ji, eldest son of Guru Nanak Dev Ji had accepted Baba Gurditta Ji as his principle disciple. Thus as a leader of *Udasi Sants,* Baba Gurditta Ji kept performing his duties as a preacher of the Sikh religion. On the sad demise of Baba Sri Chand Ji in 1629, Baba Gurditta Ji became the leader of *Udasi Sadhus.* A new preaching centre of Sikhism was raised at Kiratpur under his care and supervision.

By the advise of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib, four *Dhunies* of *Udasi* sect were established for the spread of Sikhism. Baba Almast Ji, Baloo Hasna Ji, Phool Shah Ji and Gonda Ji were appointed to manage these four institutions. Thus Sikh religion was well preached during the times of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib.

Guru Har Rai had spent most of his time on preaching tours. During his time, Kiratpur had become an important seat of Sikh religion. He made successful preaching tours of *Malwa*, *Majha* and *Doaba*. Bhai Behlo Bhoondarh, Punjab and Bhagtoo Ji were four *Masands* who were specially entrusted with the task of preaching in *Malwa* region. Satguru Har Rai Ji established three more preaching centres in addition to the above four. One such centre was in the care of a noble man of happy disposition named Sutharey Shah. His disciples and noble associates reached the message of Sikhism to far off places. The second centre (Bakhshish) was in the care of Bhagat Bhagwan Ji, who was a famous ascetic of Bihar. He commenced many sub centres in the Eastern part of India particularly in Bihar under the care and management of his disciples who helped spread Sikh religion. Bhagat Bhagwan Ji attained Sikhism under the influence of Baba Mehar Chand Ji who was a great grandson of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Before accepting Sikhism, he was a known holyman and a top class religious person. He, for the first time, came into India into the Darbar of Guru Har Rai Ji, accompanied by 360 pious souls where they all adopted Sikh faith. The third boon of the newly

opened centre fell in the lot of Bhai Pheru Ji who propagated Sikhism in Kasoor and Choonia regions.

Sri Guru Harkrishan Ji remained Guru for a very short period of time. Yet he guided the Sikhs very lovingly with his strong and sweet personality. He made Delhi as the centre of his preaching activities and by actually living the basic principles of Sikhism he demonstrated their viability to the *Sangat.*

Guru Teg Bahadur Ji established Anandpur Sahib as the centre of preaching. He visited many far flung areas of India on his preaching mission. He visited Uttar Pardesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam and Orissa. Thus Sikhism was consolidated where it had already spread. New centres were opened where Sikh ideology had not yet reached. Sylhet, Chittagong, Sondeep and Laskar still hold the signs of GuruJi's visit to these places. Father of Raja Rattan Rai (he presented *Parsadi* elephant and *Panchkula* weapon to Guru Gobind Singh Ji), king of Assam had come into the refuge of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji during these preaching tours. Then for the safety and protection of religious freedom for the citizens of India, he laid down his life in Chandani Chowk Delhi along with his three dear Sikhs – Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Sati Dass and Bhai Dayala Ji. This had induced a new spirit in Sikhism beside the preaching work.

By the times of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Sikhism had spread to far and wide places. This had become possible

due to its easily adoptable principles and the deftness with which these had been projected to the people. The noble living style of Satguru Ji and his honourable Sikhs were a great motivating factor for a common man who had yet to come out of the shackles of *Varn Ashrm Dharm.* Elaboration on two-three points at this stage would be in order. The assembly of Sikhs that had been called by Guru Gobind Singh Ji at Anandpur Sahib on first Baisakh 1699, its strength has been given by historians to touch one lakh. This number is significant when viewed in the light of most inadequate means of transportation available in those days. Roads and bridges on rivers were non-existent then. Propagation of information was very difficult and that would take many days. Thus assembly of such a large number on that day is an amazing feat, People had come from far off places. Out of the five who offered their heads to the Guru, only one Bhai Daya Singh belonged to Punjabi speaking region. Isn't it amazing that without adequate means of transport available, people from Bidar, Dawarka and Puri attended the mighty gathering of 1699 in reverence to the edict of Guru Sahib ? Bhai Dharm Singh from Hastinapur, Bhai Mohkam Singh from Dawarka, Bhai Sahib Singh from Bidar, Bhai Himmat Singh Ji from Puri and Bhai Daya Singh Ji from Lahore not only reached Anandpur Sahib but surrendered themselves totally before their Guru. Thus *Khalsa Panth* came into being.

The existence of these great men reveal that Sikhism was being preached effectively even in far off places. A

Persian historian named Ghulam Mohiudin has made a mention of the Baisakhi of 1699 when the great baptism ceremony was held. This report was sent to the Emperor. According to this report, over 20,000 Sikhs partook *Amrit* on the first day. It was the perpetual preachings in Anandpur that had filled the badly mauled Hindus to take up cudgels with iron strong Muslim rulers. This had also given them the resolve to establish a righteous rule after liquidating the kingdom of falsehood.

Before that Guru Ji had sent five Sikhs to Benares in order to receive education in Sanskrit, study and understand Hindu scriptures. These are called *Nirmalas* in Sikh history.

Even after the battles, Guru Gobind Singh Ji paid particular attention to the preaching tasks. After vacating Anandpur Sahib and finally coming to Talwandi Sabo, a new preaching centre at **Damdama Sahib** came up which also became a great centre of education. In the care and guidance of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, this centre acquired such high reputation which virtually brought the memories of Anandpur Sahib in the minds of the Sikhs. No historian has done any justice in describing this short span of stay of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, where so much had been achieved in so short a time. Some historians like Malcolm have said much and contrary to the truth. In order to impress upon the readers how much significant work had been done here, we give views of some other writers. C.H. Payne writes,

"After freeing himself from all the anxieties, Guru Gobind Singh Ji re-established his *Darbar* with all regal pomp and show. Damdama became a centre of Sikh religion, and scholars of the country started assembling here. Countless men enrolled themselves in the Khalsa Army. The overall condition of Guru Gobind Singh improved as had never before."

According to Dr. Trumpp, Guru Gobind Singh Ji baptized one lakh twenty thousands Sikhs here. This figure will certainly make any non-Sikh but impartial person bow his head with respect before Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who after the battle of Chamkaur, due to far-sightedness of those five Sikhs who had asked him to leave instead of laying down his life fighting; had spent his life and effort in reestablishing the *Khalsa* order on firm footings. This was achieved in such difficult times and adverse conditions. According to Dr. Trump,

"Guru Gobind Singh's main objective here was preaching and propagation of Sikhism in which he achieved significant success. He established a sound and firm place for himself here and he named it as Damdama Sahib. This place became Benares of the Sikhs".

Although Latif was not prepared to rise above communal envy, yet he accepted that Guru Ji met with remarkable success in spreading Sikhism during his stay in

Talwandi Sabo. He has attributed this success to illiteracy and ignorance of the population there. According to Latif,

> "Guru Ji was promoting Sikhism through preaching in *Malwa* region. This was not a difficult task because the people of the region were illiterate and foolish."

This cannot be the reason for the people of *Malwa* to adopt Sikhism. All the same, his statement amply establishes that during the Guru period, the people adopted Sikh religion with impunity.

It was here that Guru Ji assigned the task of exposition of *Gurbani* to Bhai Mani Singh Ji and Baba Deep Singh Ji.

By the foregoing statement it can be established without doubt and with confidence that the preaching of Sikhism was very effective during the period of Ten Gurus. A large number of people adopted Sikhism speedily.

STATE OF PREACHING – FROM BANDA SINGH TO SIKH RULE

Before discussion of the subject of preaching during the period of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and the establishment of Sikh rule under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, it is important to know the horrendous state of condition during this period.

Moghul rulers had vowed to annihilate the Sikhs and on the contrary, Sikhs had resolved not to let such an unrighteous and tyrannical rule continue. They were in favour of establishing such a rule that would provide religious freedom, spread truth and righteousness to all. Many happenings of this period exposed the great traits and principles of Sikhism. These events proved beyond doubt that Sikhism provides unimaginable strength to its followers in fight against tyranny, oppression and unrighteousness and re-establishment of truth. Its followers will never face defeat in their divine mission.

Very soon, the Sikh religion established itself on firm footings and taking up cudgels with the tyrannical rule, shook the foundation of such a strong kingdom about which

no one could dream at that time. After 1708, the Sikh nation recommenced its struggle under the leadership of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. Enemies of the righteousness and slanderers were picked and annihilated. And yet the cruelty and oppression had the upper hand. After many successes, the tyranny and bigotry reappeared in the Muslims. Exterminating such unrighteous and irreligious persons like Wazir Khan and Sucha Nand, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and his compatriots had to sacrifice their lives facing tyranny and oppressions. As always, Sikhs did not flinch an iota and proved the greatness of Sikh faith. Thereafter, such a reign of terrorism was unleashed that patrolling parties of soldiers were let lose in villages and towns. Any ruler who sat on the throne of Lahore or Delhi took a solemn vow to exterminate the Sikhs. Sikh religion was declared as anti state/rulers. Rewards were fixed and declared for bringing a Sikh dead or alive. The mobile patrolling parties were given express instructions not to leave any Sikh alive in a village or town. A severed head of a Sikh would fetch rupees fifty as reward and an alive Sikh arrested used to fetch rupees eighty. By today's standard, this amount is very handsome. It was during this period that in 1738, the great Sikh scholar and a preacher Bhai Mani Singh Ji was executed by cutting every joint of his body. In 1745, Bhai Taru Singh was killed by removing his skull. The atrocities went beyond the limits of animal instincts in a man. Such heart rending atrocities left everyone in a doubt regarding the possible survival of Sikh religion. But who knew that a

bunch of Sikhs who can step into the field with the mission of protecting Hindu religion from perpetual oppression and annihilation and with a resolve of establishing righteousness, cannot be weak or coward. They had become so strong that it was impossible to finish them. However by 1739, the influence of its enemy had become so powerful that it had become difficult to seek a Sikh anywhere in Punjab. Many had left for neighbouring states, mountains or wasteland to re-group and reorganise themselves for a bigger confrontation. But the rulers had spread a belief among the people that the Sikhs have been exterminated. To prove it wrong, both Bota Singh, and Garja Singh, two brave Sikhs established an octroi post on the highway near *Noordin di Saran* of Village Noordin and started collecting tax. In the skirmish, though both fell martyrs, they had removed the doubt from the minds of the people that Sikhs have been finished totally. In furtherance of this belief, Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh beheaded the evil-minded Massa Ranghar during the day in the Darbar Sahib during 1740. This was the time when it was difficult for Sikhs to even appear anywhere in Punjab what to speak of freedom of movement around. The small and great holocaust took place in 1746 and 1762 respectively. Thousands of Sikhs were put to sword. It was in these conditions that in 1757 Baba Deep Singh Ji took up his *Khanda* to fight the oppression and proved beyond doubt that it was foolishness to confront Sikhs who were as strong and stable as Himalayas. This nation can neither be finished nor swayed or removed from

their aim. Finally, the great Sikh warriors like Nawab Kapur Singh, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and many other unsung heroes succeeded in ending the tyrannical rule by the power of their swords. The good work was well consolidated by later Sikhs like Akali Phoola Singh, S. Hari Singh Nalwa, S. Sham Singh Attari and Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who managed to establish righteous rule in Punjab.

In such difficult times, it is not possible for any preaching organisation to survive let alone do preaching work. An impartial analysis and study of these times will reveal that had it been any other nation in place of Sikhs, perhaps its name would have disappeared from the pages of modern history. This was the great characteristics of Sikhism that it had filled its followers with tremendous amount of trust in their cause, courage, determination and stability that did not let pessimism come into their mind even during such trying conditions. It is however accepted that it landed strong blow on the preaching activities of Sikh nation. It was not for every Tom, Dick or Harry to adopt Sikhism. It would mean that the person is prepared to bear untold hardships and tyranny for life long period. Because in such an unlawful rule, Sikhs had been declared anti rulers. So in the light of this truth, adopting Sikhism would have meant inviting death.

Despite all these impositions, young people from other

religions were still trickling into Sikh brotherhood. A latent preaching of Sikh religion was taking place through their display of high moral character, courage, bravery righteousness, sacrifice and welfare of others. The Sikh life style was so noble that anyone with a small element of humanity and decency, who would come in contact with a Sikh, would develop love and devotion for Sikh ideals. It would often motivate him to adopt Sikhism despite many dangerous situations. Much massacre of Sikhs took place during the period of Meer Manu but Sikhs were making this belief more conspicious that "no sickle of Manu can cut us to extinction as we will prosper many times more". The preachers of that period were indeed very noble and moral persons. Whosoever came into their contact, would become so impressed with their character that he would resolve to become a Sikh. Sikh history has made a mention of many such persons who came into *Khalsa* brotherhood after taking *Khande-di-Pahul* at the hands of Bhai Mani Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh, Baba Deep Singh and Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Although Sikhs had reduced in number and inflow was also very scant, yet they had strengthened their temperament and characteristics of determination, strong personality and ever remaining in prosperous state of mind. They had brought glory to the esteem and honour of Sikhism by irrigating it with their blood.

State of Preaching After Sikh Rule : Let us now deliberate on the state of affairs after the Sikh rule till today.

In fact after acquiring power, it started slipping towards its decline. The character of the leaders started falling. The preaching programme had been more or less renounced by the leaders. Baring a few great and pious souls, most of the Sikhs had started shedding away their high moral living style. During the Sikh rule, many opportunists had entered into Sikh fold for selfish purpose and to enjoy the long awaited authority of ruling. Of course, the Sikh strength was increasing but quality of Sikhs was waning. Their Sikh style of living, truthful character and moral aptitude had suffered a blow. The body was being adored without the elements of religion and righteousness in it. For how long can a body not emit stink without soul in it? Similarly, when the religions soul was leaving the body, for how long could the body have survived? The position of Sikh strength/ population became evident during a couple of census held during the British rule.

Those opportunists who had joined Sikh brotherhood when the power had fallen into the hands of Sikhs, now started leaving the brotherhood once the Sikhs had lost power. Some opportunists now joined Sikhism in the preaching cadre. They commenced preaching anti-Sikh ideology in the name of the religion. Sikhs started drifting away from *Gurbani* and Sikh principles. The character of Sikhs started declining. Many bad customs and traditions found their way into their lives. Some movements like *Nirankari* and *Namdhari* came up to save the nation from

the evils of the period. Despite meeting challenges of the time, these could not prove effective in the long run. In fact these institutions became cause of living Guru cult, which was anti *Gurmat*. During this period, *'Singh Sabhas'* came up who did some commendable work. In the beginning of the twentieth century, organisations like 'Chief Khalsa Diwan' and 'Panch Khalsa Diwan' came into existence. They implemented preaching programmes as per their charter. A new awakening came into the nation. Sikhs discarded the blanket of Brahmanism. Sikh literature was improved and a distinct *Khalsa* reappeared, which gave birth to 'Gurudwara Reform Movement'. *Mahants* occupying and running the affairs of Gurudwara, became corrupt and licentious. After many sacrifices, *Panth* managed to take possession of their Gurudwaras. 'Shiromani Gurudawara Prabandhak Committee' (SGPC) was formed to take administrative and management control of all historic Gurudawaras. Gradual ingress of sub-standard leaders in SGPC left the institution weak and ineffective for religious purpose. The resources of Gurudawaras were now used with impunity for political gains by selfish and incapable leaders. They were bereft of the great ideals of *Gurmat* and were seized with a total desire of gaining political mileage via religion : Priorities of religion over politics got reversed. SGPC became an arena of political feuds and settlements despite being a primary religious institution of the Sikhs.

The well wishers of the *Panth* are lamenting today that

Sikhism which is best and universal religion and that provides the lead to the solution to our modern age and its problems, a religion whose followers achieved incomparable strength, determination and lofty character and for whose prosperity, countless braves sacrificed their lives bearing exemplary hardships and cruelties; what to speak of its spread in other countries, it is facing dislocation and unsettlement in its own homeland. Shearing of hair, trimming of moustaches and beard, getting madly attached with tobacco and addiction to alcohol and other intoxicants are rampant amongst the Sikh youth. Their moral character seems to have gone bankrupt and it should be a matter of great concern for the well wishers of the *Panth*. On one hand, we are fast discarding the Sikh tenets and on the other hand, we are becoming apostates. Such young Sikhs are becoming the cause of decline in our strength. With the increase in overall population of India, we may have increased a little but in proportion to the other religions, our strength is on the decline. The great desire of acquiring authority amongst our leaders coupled with their selfish attitude and substandard preaching efforts are emerging as causes of extinction of the *Quom*.

The preaching history of Budhism reveal that its preachers used to assemble in big numbers. During the times of Bodhi kings, big conference of these preachers used to be held. During the times of Ashoka, the great, Mohindera and Sanghmitra, the members of the ruling

family became *Bhikshoos* (preachers) and went abroad to preach the ideology of Budha. A well-planned and organised preaching could spread Budhism far and wide. Even the Christians are not preaching their religions on the strength of the ruling power but their preaching organisations are worth studying and emulating. The success of Rama Krishna Mission is attributable to their well-organised preaching system. Similarly, Ahmadias could spread their religion to far off places by well coordinated and organised efforts by their business class people. Their preaching organisations can be easily seen in the periodicals published by them from foreign countries.

There has always been a need for spreading the ideology of religion through an organised way and in a uniform fashion. Even with the involvement of a few good devoted souls in this task, not very lasting and satisfactory result can be obtained. Such efforts would lack uniformity and secondly, all the good work would possibly come to nought after one is no more. In order to save Sikh nation from the impending decline and to reach its voice to other people of the world, it is essential that preachers are prepared by a central and a well organised body. This way, essential preaching traits could be inculcated in them. Once these preachers are trained, their deployment in the field should also be done centrally. These preachers can then be saved from financial and economic hardships by the central body.

In 1956, some inspired young Sikh college students made up their minds to take up religious preaching. To do justice to their venture, all of them first worked hard to know for themselves in the light of *Gurbani* what really is Sikh ideology? For the correct analysis of *Gurbani*, which scholars should be approached? What should be considered as authentic history and how could Sikh culture be brought out. Although it was an effect of blind men searching something in the dark, yet by the grace of God, the caravan of devotees and servants kept on increasing that developed into a movement of religious preachings. Sikh Missionary College is the outcome of that movement.

The projects of religious preachings commenced by Sikh Missionary College establishes an assurance of good future of the Sikh nation. But these efforts are not commensurate with the need. This is particularly so when group of ambitious and aspiring *Sadhus*, vehement preachings of living Guru cult, promoting atheism under the garb of logic and rationality and actions of our so called religious and political leaders is negating all the good work. The state is going from bad to worst. The youth is fast becoming an apostate. The glamour of fashion, ever increasing use of intoxicants and drug addiction and fast increasing materialistic tendencies are weaning the people away from the path of Sikhism. People with religious temperaments have been thrust into the rigmarole of rites and rituals routine and blind faith by the self-appointed

saints. True and genuine well-wishers of the *Panth* are apathetic towards the future. All well-wishers of the *Panth* need to assemble as one and launch a vigorous preaching effort. And those organisations, which are already involved in preaching works, need to coordinate their efforts and resources for greater effect. We pray to all the preachers, all those who are involved with Sikh nation, who hold a soft and emotional corner for Sikhism in their heart whether they are teachers, preachers, *Granthis*, Lecturers, self styled *Saints*, *Sabhas* and Societies, governing bodies of Gurudawaras, leaders of the Sikh masses at various levels to realise their responsibilities at such a crucial hour and take concrete steps to arrest the fast decline in the arrest of Sikh nation. If we fail now, the coming generations will not forgive us for our laikadesical approach. We may also be held responsible for wasting away the blood soaked martyrdom of our brave Sikhs.

CREATE GOOD MISSIONARIES

To arrest the fast downward slide of the Sikh nation, we will have to take multi-pronged action. One out of these is to create good missionaries. This aspect has not been much heeded by our religious bodies. Some organisations may have tried sorting the problem out but a concrete solution would accrue by putting roots on firm footing, the branches will get sorted out automatically.

We will now dwell on our present cadre of preachers and how should they be. In this regard, we can obtain directions from our preachers of yester years.

It is by and large agreed that we are now bereft of determination of living a complete Sikh life. A complete *Gurusikh* is hard to come by. Then incidents of our new generation leaving their religion for some reason or the other are ever on the increase. This is obviously creating doubts about the future of Sikhism. We have fallen both from the quantity and quality.

The standard of our character has not remained what was a matter of pride for us. Morality is disappearing from our lives. Alcohol consumption, use of intoxicants, tobacco

chewing, characterlessness and falling prey to materialism are becoming part of our lives. A general disinterest from *Gurbani*, Sikh principles and code of conduct is spreading. And ironically, there is no means to save the nation from falling in this decline. Sikhs have no preaching organisation in the real sense. The political and religious leadership of the community is marching on the wrong track. The inferiority complex amongst the new generation due to political reasons as well as communal stances of the majority community has increased so much that it has virtually rendered them hollow and courageless. Therefore, a feeling of uncertainty regarding the future of Sikhism is natural to appear.

Preaching amongst the Sikhs is being done differently by *Granthis*, *Raagis*, *Dhadis*, *Kathvachaks*, Lecturers and some independents like *Udasis*, *Nirmalas*, *Sewa Panthis* and so on, including self-appointed *Sants* or imposters in the garb of a Saint. The standard of preaching in the community is very low. Perhaps the quality of our missionaries is worst than that of other world religions. Barring a few, a large number of such people have made their ingress into the preaching foray, who are just not capable of performing these services. Neither are they adherents of the specific code of conduct, thus living a practical life according to Guru's order, nor are they educated. They are neither zealous of preaching nor do they carry impressive personality that can convince today's youth/ seeker to adopt Sikhism.

To create a cadre of capable missionaries, 'Shahid Sikh Missionary College' commenced at Amritsar in 1927. This was started by SGPC. In 1967, Gurmat College, Patiala came into being. If we compare the output of these two colleges with Papal Seminary, Pune or Gurukul of Hinduism or even Islamic institute at Deoband, we shall have to face disappointment.

If we had capable, enthusiastic and zealous preachers, they could have done much good for the community. Only good missionaries can mould spiritual state of the upcoming generation beside putting the present generation on to the right track. Only capable and intelligent preachers can give correct directions to the religious, social, political and communal ideology. In fact, good missionaries can present our so-called religious and political leaders from making such blunders and save the community from damages and ignominies.

If our present missionary organisations are bereft of enthusiastic, zealous and investigative preachers and our missionaries do not have needed traits in them, much responsibility and blame befalls on our community. There is no institution which can meet the essential needs of food, clothing and shelter of our missionaries, nor can the need of education related requirements of their children can be taken care of, to enable them free their minds for missionary work. Those Gurudawaras who may have made suitable provisions for all these mandatory requirements, the

missionaries show callous attitude to their task. A large number of self-made missionaries have spread such a network of apostacies and rituals that a common Sikh of the Guru is incapable of understanding true Sikhism. As a result, many Sikhs are not prepared to listen to the truth if someone is trying to convey to them since the falsehood has made an indelible mark on their minds. Even the preachers are not prepared to sacrifice their personal gains and preach *Gurmat* fearlessly. On the contrary, they keep thinking new ingeniousness by which they can extract more money or gains from the *Sangat.* Self interested people make offerings to such unscrupulous preachers and have a seal of acceptance fixed on all their anti Sikh activities. It is the duty of our missionaries and preachers to condemn such customs and rituals which are anti-*Gurmat* and are performed on the occasions of marriages or during last rites of a deceased. If they are not able to reform it, at least they can boycott it. But for the greed of some money, they keep a shut eye on performing marriages of Sikh girls with apostates, holding of such rites as *Jaimala.* (Both bride and bridegroom garland each other), giving quilts, utensils, fruits, umbrellas, shoes etc. during last rites of the deceased, observing *Sharadh*, *Pitar Pooja*, Newmoon nights, Full moon nights, first day of the Indian month, thoughts about auspicious and inauspicious days, visit to the pilgrim centres, *Sampat Paths*, series of *Akhand Paths* and many more such rituals; and instead of taking the Sikhs out of these falsehoods, they encourage it. Our great Sikhs of history were the true specimen of *Gurmat* principles and they knew

how to sacrifice themselves to ensure their implementation. Stalwarts like Baba Budha Ji, Bhai Alah Yaar Khan, Bhai Gurdas Ji, Baba Deep Singh Ji, Nawab Kapur Singh and many other of their ilk never compromised on Sikh principles. Neither our present day missionaries could be moulded in their form, nor appropriate capabilities inculcated in them. Let us now consider what traits should our preachers have and where do we stand on this account :

1. Educational Qualification : A missionary must be well informed and well educated both in spiritual and temporal matters. His worldly education should be above normal citizen of his community. Beside possessing a deep knowledge of his own religion, he should be will acquainted with the philosophy of the other religions.

And to keep harping on such statements that preaching has no concern with worldly education and that a preacher must live a pious, noble and practically moral life, is an infructuous contention. Pious and practical moral life is a must for a missionary and to draw up a preaching programme without this mandatory requisite is an appropriate venture. But to ignore a higher educational qualification is a big mistake. Many missionaries in the absence of requisite qualification keep narrating fables which often go at a tangent or against the subject of presentation. Many put their audience into a confusion with mysterious and deep meaning statements. They obviously try to create their impression on the *Sangat*, in order to draw

maximum benefit from them. To say that 'an English knowing person cannot be a missionary because he acquires specious reasoning and becomes bereft of religious and spiritual knowledge is a big fallacy and an unforgivable high handedness. What a warpped logic that an English knowing person cannot abide by the Sikh code of conduct. To promote one's own shortcomings as a virtue and mislead the coming generation is, cheating with preaching. *Gurmat* axiom on acquisition of knowledge is *'Vidyâ veechari tâ parupkâri* and not just opposing it for no cogent reasons. *Gurmat* does not hold any language as favourite or despicable. When Swami Daya Nand associated Sanskrit with gods and goddesses, Muslims came to the quick and declared Arabic as language of *Allah*. Sikh ideology has vehemently opposed such beliefs. To say that 'atheist would be born if English is read', is our biggest misfortune. English is a universal language at this time and therefore, should be made compulsory for our preachers. And to cover their inadequacy of this knowledge, if our preachers make such comments as saying – 'what preaching can a B.A., M.A. or a Ph.D. scholar do'; and that this is best done by those who hold faith, it is natural to develop trepidations for the future in our minds. Faith is important for missionary work but it also requires something more with it. Some more traits are essential.

The religious and spiritual education of a missionary must also be of very high standard beside the worldly education. In addition to good knowledge of his religion, he

must be well conversant with other religions to be able to present a comparison and establish superiority of ideology of his religion. He must know principles of Sikhism according to *Gurbani*. When he is speaking, it is necessary that he himself should be understanding what he is saying and whatever trust and faith he is passing on to others, he must also hold it dear to his own heart. That preacher alone is effective who can put across his mind in a simple way with cogent arguments and firm belief.

Prathmey man(u) parbodhai apnâ
pâchhai aver reejhâvai.
Râm naam jap hirdai jâpai
mukh te sagal sunâvai. *(Page-381)*

Jin kao man kî parteet(i) nâhî,
Nânak se kiâ katheh giânai. *(Page-647)*

Apnâ man(u) parbodhauh boojhauh soî.
Lok samjhâvauh suney nâ koî. *(Page-230)*

Apnâ âp(u) n pachhânai moorhâ.
avarâ âkh dukhâey. *(Page-549)*

Ik(i) keh jânan(i) kahiâ bujhan(i)
te nar sugharh saroop. *(Page-1411)*

When we see well read and highly qualified missionaries with Christians, *Arya Samajists* and Rama Krishna Mission, and we compare them with our own missionary stock, we feel like crying. The Christians came from such far off lands and succeeded in making their followers many time more in number in India than us. Whatever success was achieved by Soami Vivekanand in making his followers in America, England, France, etc., no one can deny the hand of his educational qualification and vast knowledge that he had acquired.

Sikh community does not lack educational resources but due to the absence of a strong organisation, no well read person is prepared to take up missionary work. Barring a few persons in authority, whosoever is illiterate and uncouth, whoever is substandard element of the community, who is unable to earn his livelihood in any other profession, has come into the profession of missionary work. By improving his external appearance and without preaching capabilities he has succeeded in becoming '*Giani Ji*'. Perhaps there is no other nation in the world who had set aside well read literate and capable persons and given the reins of missionary work in the hands of illiterate and uncultured people than Sikhs.

Beside being bereft of academic qualification, our denotative preachers are totally devoid of religious and spiritual knowledge. As a result, they are incapable of explaining the *Gurmat* aspects of any subject. They speak

wrong, They narrate wrong stories/episodes and promote anti-*Gurmat* principles under the name of *Gurmat.*

Once upon a time, Sikhs had such highly educated and expert missionaries as Bhai Mani Singh Ji and Baba Deep Singh Ji who lived holy, noble and model life. Even in those trying days for the Sikhs, Baba Deep Singh Ji had Sri Guru Granth Sahib translated in Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati and Persian with the sole aim of preaching ideology of Guru Nanak. This fact may astonish many preachers of today. The honourable post of a *Granthi* used to be respected by the old Sikhs by calling its holder as *Babe da Wazir* (Minister of Guru). But seeing the standard of today's *Granthis* or so called *Babe de Wazir* one is compelled to shed tears of blood. They are unconcerned with the religious sentiments and hunger for spirituality of *Sangat* of their area. Which way are the young people and children drifting, they have no concern with it. They can hardly explain the deep nuances of any line of *Gurbani.* If they are asked a question on *Rahat Maryada*, they feel peeved. They keep bringing out hundreds of shortcomings of young people but are deaf to their spiritual and religious queries. They keep making noise and claiming that the world is becoming atheist day by day or the people have lost faith in religion. But they make no efforts in setting the matters right. How can they? They are totally hollow of knowledge.

Along with the thoughts on *Granthi Singhs*, a thought on *Dhadi Singhs* (Bards) also leaves very disappointing

feelings amongst the well-wishers. The *Dhadis* could have sung the glories of our great warriors and described inspiring episodes from the history in folklore style of singing that finds ready acceptability amongst the Sikh youth. But it is sad to say that the whole community may not have more than a dozen capable *Dhadis*. Many who are seen on the stages of various Gurudawaras distorts and corrupt the historical facts to such an extent that these start appearing untrue and against the Sikh philosophy. All this is done to impress gullible people and expect more monetary rewards. In totality, we shall have to accept that barring a few, most of our missionaries are not fit for the task.

2. High Morality and Pious Practical Life : *Gurmat* has no place for superfluous knowledge and purposeless education. Abiding by the laid down code of conduct is must. *Avar updesey aap na karai* attitude is unacceptable in *Gurmat*. The dichotomy in what is preached and what is being practiced by the preachers does not leave a good impression. It was the result of pious practical life and sound knowledge of Prof. Gurmukh Singh, founder of 'Singh Sabha Lehar' that attacked Arya Samaj followers like Giani Dit Singh and Bhai Jawahar Singh to the Sikh fold but also made them capable of leading the community in this trying time. How important is practical life for a preacher and what direction is given by *Gurbani* in this matter is not a matter to be set aside. If our missionaries have some resolves and determination to bring the entire humanity under the flag of Guru Nanak, they must deliberate on the following

sermons of *Gurbani* on the importance of noble conduct and bring them into their lives.

Hirdai kapat(u) mukh gyânî.
Jhoothey kahâ bilovas(i) pânî. *(Page-650)*

Antar(i) bikh(u) mukh(i) amrit(u) sunâvai.
Jam pur(i) bâdhâ chotâ khâvai. *(Page-194)*

Jis dai andar(i) sach(u) hai
so sachâ naam mukh(i) sach(u) alâey.
Oh(u) Har(i) mârg(i) âp(i) chaldâ,
hornâ no Har(i) mârg(i) pâey. *(Page-140)*

Bikhia mâtey bharm(i) bhulâey.
Updes(u) kaheh kis(u) bhâee. *(Page-909)*

Karhchhîâ phirann(i) suâo n jânan(i) sunjhîâ.
Seyee mukh disann(i) Nanak ratey prem ras(i).
(Page-521)

Kabîr avareh kao updestey
mukh mai pari hai reyt(u).
Râs(i) birânî râkhatey
khâyâ ghar kâ khet(u). *(Page-1369)*

Rahat avar kachh(u) avar kamâvat.
Man(i) nahî preet(i) mukhauh gandh lâvat.
Jânanhâr Prabhû parbeen.
Bâhar(i) bhekh n kahoo bheen.
Avar updesai âp(i) n karai.
Âvat jâvat janmai marai. *(Page-269)*

Those missionaries, who **preach for fulfilment of their** selfish aims, may deliver very **impressive and well prepared** lecture but it will not have **much effect on the** listeners. He who indulges in preaching for earning his livelihood, his preaching is impossible to be effective because there normally is a wide gap between his practical life and his speeches. Advising others to abstain from indulging in vices and immoral acts, while his own character has gone bankrupt, can definitely not make any impression on anyone.

We keep planning preaching campaigns without preachers of pious and noble life. The absence of suitable missionaries had been the main causes of failure of campaigns during the last fifty years. We have abundance of incapable and greedy men who themselves are the masters of shoddy living. They live life contrary to the advise of *Gurbani*. Not much success can be expected from their preachings. Their own conditions are deplorable. More appropriate would have been, had they brought their

children up for missionary work. On the contrary, they do not permit their children to take up missionary work. This aspect of moral and noble living should be paid particular attention to by all well-wishers of the *Panth.*

3. True and Intense Devotion for Missionary Work : High education and pious practical life alone are not enough for the success of missionary work. For example, success, true and intensive devotion for preaching is also essential. Infact this devotion should be in every Sikh, but a preacher should possess much greater enthusiasm and zeal.

Gurbani has held such persons in honour who spend their lives in service and uniting others with Lord. Such people have been called Benevolent. Despite such honourable status, it is strange to find indifferent attitude amongst our missionaries to the task of putting the world at large on the right spiritual and religious track. To say that no preaching will take place by our efforts and that it is Lord's task and He will do it Himself, are just excuses that depict total lack of interest in missionary work. Such gimmickry is not good in such a noble and important task. It can prove damaging to the community. Efforts in preaching religion can only spread the gospel of religion. No other trickery can help.

If words of the Lord could be spread sitting at home, Guru Nanak would not have travelled to various countries,

putting people on the right spiritual track. He could have enlightened others through his own light while sitting at home. After all who could have been a more sublime light than him? It is true that a lighted beacon can enlighten an extinguished beacon but an extinguished lamp needs to be addressed and attended to. And this can only be done if one has devotion, zeal and love to see it lighted. The following lines of *Gurbani* needs attention :

Oey purkh prânî dhan(i) jan heh
updes(u) kareh parupkâreâ. *(Page-311)*

Amrit(u) bolai sadâ mukh(i) vainî.
Amrit(u) vekhai parkhai sadâ nainî.
Amrit kathâ kahai sadâ din râtî
avarâ âkh(i) sunâvaniâ. *(Page-118)*

Âp(i) japauh avrâ nâm japavauh. *(Page-289)*

It is a known fact that our Sikhs of yester year were of highly pious nature and character. It is difficult to find epitomes of such supreme sacrifices and righteousness in the history of the world as were given by the Sikh history of eighteenth century. These great men were very knowledgeable about religious philosophy and lived a practical life according to the religious tenets and code. Then how did our missionary work suffer after them ? Why could these enlightened beacons not light up other beacons ? When

their morality and pious life style was a role model, why did more people not emulate these icons? As a matter of fact, these people were totally engrossed in protecting and saving Sikhism from the political turmoil and they were not able to participate actively in the task of spreading the gospel of Guru Nanak. Even the conditions were not favourable for missionary work and therefore, preaching devotion could not have been maintained.

It has been impressed upon us that only true and pious living style is enough for preaching and its fragrance would be enough to spread Sikhism. This fallacy needs to be set aside. Good educational qualification and pious life style are essential but not good for missionary work in themselves. Specious reasoners extend the argument of lighting a beacon with a lit lamp wrongly and injudiciously. They are not prepared to consider the aspects of true devotion and zeal as essential in the spread and propagation of religion.

Our highest religious aim is limited to leading a religious greatness. We have no love and zeal in our minds for spreading the greatness of *Gurbani,* projecting to the whole world the life style of our Gurus and other pious and noble Sikhs as the icons or role models. That is why the profession of missionaries have not been given due respect and honour and no one is willing to enter into this service. We ourselves have not succeeded in understanding *Gurbani* and are not prepared to mould our life style accordingly to the extent. We may have understood it. *Gurbani* is an ocean

and to realise its depth, we shall have to get into it to collect pearls and diamonds of wisdom.

How we wish we had devoted missionaries like Vivekanand who could reach the voice of *Gurmat* to the world. The amount of devotion shown by Mirzai Ahmadias in the spread of their cult and philosophy, if this much effort is done by our preaching cadre we would achieve significant results. We may not seek and wish the reigns like Ashoka, Kanishka or Harshvardhan to provide support of the rulers for the spread of religion of truth in the world, but can definitely expect preachers with deep devotion and dedication of Kumaral Bhatt and Soami Shankarcharya. Hearing the sad state of his religion from his father, Kumaral took to missionary work with a renowned zeal. Beside knowing about his own religious philosophy, he learnt Budhism. Only then he was able to defeat Buddist monk in debates and discussions to revive the glory of his religion. Let well-wishers of the *Panth* identify and produce missionaries of zeal, devotion and grit. They should be encouraged. Religious preaching can best be done by those who love their religion, have faith in its goodness and devotion in their heart to bless others with its virtues. Those who preach with the sole intention of collecting money can do no good to the cause of Sikh community.

4. Ability to Impress : Despite presence of three essentials of good education (both academic and spiritual), pious life style and devotion and dedication, a preacher may

not be able to project himself impressively, resulting in failure of his mission. With the above traits, the ability to impress and influence also get generated but some other characteristics like his appearance, style of carrying himself, dress sense, his way of conversation and speaking style, his financial and social standing and the missionary organisation patronising or promoting him also leave impression on the minds of *Sangat.* Our missionary is not too well off in his this regard. Both socially and financially, his status is rather unsound. The shortcomings are very evident when we compare them with Christian missionaries. The Sikhs have yet to undertake the system of preaching in other communities, races and brotherhoods. This demands very high level of knowledge on comparative studies of religion and cults. Due to poor financial state, they often have to tow the line of the Management Committee of the Gurudawaras. They have to learn various tricks of collecting more money from *Sangat.* And these acts destroy their personality. Therefore, to project a missionary in right perspective, Sikh *Sangat,* Management of the Gurudawaras and other Sikh organisations need to pay necessary attention. He who is more worried about arranging food, shelter and clothing for his family, cannot pay any attention towards development of his personality. Unless a central organisation of the community is formed, who should re-frame the campaign of missionary work *ab initio,* we may not be able to create the above stated traits in our missionaries. We shall have to remain without preaching till then.

ON PREACHING TECHNIQUE

(OUR VISIT TO DARUL-ULOOM, DEOBAND)

The subject of preaching of Sikhism appears in newspapers and magazines off and on. It is evidence of the concern in the minds of well-wishers of the *Panth,* that despite possessing all the traits of becoming a universal religion, it has not been able to become one. By a close study of missionary system of various religions of the world and their history, many factors surface which demand consideration and deliberations.

The missionary history of Islam reveal use of ruling power and thus use of sword to force people to adopt Muslim religion. Many *sufis*, *pirs* and *faquirs* without doubt has contributed substantially to its spread.

Christians have used money power for the spread of their faith but many more realities also surface when an in-depth study of the missionary system is carried out. These cannot be ignored. Undoubtedly, Christian states made many concrete efforts to spread the faith of Jesus Christ. History tells us that many battles had been fought in the past by the faithful for the protection of the faith. For many years now, countries with majority population of Christians

have contributed their financial might substantially beside many other welfare means. Abundance of finance alone cannot ensure effective preaching. To understand the secret of their success, we need to study their organisation and their devotion to serve mankind in the name of Christ. We cannot ignore their love for their religion and inexhaustible desire of preaching.

The help that Budhism reserved from Ashoka, Kanishka and Harsha for its spread and various methods adopted by the followers of Budhism for preaching could be a subject of interest for Sikhs desirous of venturing into missionary work.

Many religions of the world had been able to make a significant impression of their existence through missionary efforts despite being not too sound in their religious philosophy and debatable ideology. With all its wonderful traits and amazing simplicity, Sikhism could not make a mark due to the absence of preaching techniques. Other people managed to sell their copper at the rate of gold by virtue of good preaching system. Our callousness did not help us sell our gold even at the price of copper.

Whereas wise nations actively spread their faith, they resolve their sensitive issues with far-sightedness. We have been rather lazy and careless even from this aspect.

In 1857, a historic rebellion took place in India. In this sensitive time, some wise and far-sighted persons of Muslim brotherhood took some deft, timely and lasting steps. This is the topic of this chapter.

During the revolt, it had become evident to Maulwi Mehmood that Islam has more or less lost their reign in India and may never be able to secure power alone in the near future. By this far-sighted analysis, he concluded that Islam cannot spread by the power of the sword in future nor by any other weapon of ruling power hitherto used. If Islam has to save itself in India in the future, it must increase its strength. This can best be done by the power of knowledge and education. This idea remained in his mind for some time and finally he made up his mind to found a missionary college for the spread of Islam. Islamic Missionary College at Deoband (Distt. Muzaffarnagar) is the brain child born out of the idea that sprouted in the mind of Maulwi Mehmood. Maulwi Sahib and his companions went through some trying time initially and it is worth acquanting oneself with all those strenuous and difficult days. Today, it has estbalished the primary institute of Islam the world over for training religious and missionary cadre.

The obstacles in the path of missionary work and spread of Sikhism has multifaceted reasons. But one fundamental reason on which a finger can be laid straight away is the absence of an establishment or an institute for preachers training, where young Sikhs can be trained in

true and pious way of leading life according to the Sikh tenets, where the personalities of the potential missionaries can be developed and moulded to become impressive orators, where devotion and dedication for preaching work can be instilled, knowledge – both spiritual and academic can be imparted, where they can be trained and raised to the honourable level (professionally) in the society. The two Sikh Missionary Colleges; one at Amritsar and the other at Patiala have not produced enough graduates to even make a scratch on the body of the *Panth*. Therefore, an effective, trustworthy and a large scale establishment needs to be raised on firm footings.

With this aim in view, nearly a dozen and a half members study group made up by managers, preachers and students visited Darul-Uloom, Deoband.

How was this study group received and welcomed is not the subject that needs description. Therefore, these details are omitted. But what was gained through meetings and conversations with the management, observed with own eyes definitely deserve elucidation. It will please those who hold some pain for Sikhism in their heart and motivate them to dwell on the subject of what needs to be done. It will surely wake the well-wishers of the *Panth* from their deep slumber and make than scratch their brain to devise effective methods to resolve and correct our own state of affairs. Nothing can be achieved by idle talks. Hard work

is needed to take the community out of the present ignominy. Much before we need to correct our process of thinking and our thoughts. Our study group members met many members of the administrative and teaching staff. However a member named Hazrat Hamidul Ansari of the Administrative Committee could give maximum time to us.

From the records of the institution, it was found that it has been functioning in the missionary field since 1863. We were highly surprised to know that no discord of any nature had resulted during the last ninety years on the matter of management of the institution. No false allegations had been made on any member in all these years. There had been no court case. No outside or opposing Muslim group had ever tried to take over this institution forcibly. No false and malicious propaganda had ever been made in the city regarding any member of the management cadre. Possibly by this is a very cogent reason of the prosperity of this establishment since 1863. There isn't a single organisation which has not faced discord for possession of authority. No big or small organisation has survived a rift or discord for as long as 5 years. According to the writings of Master Tara Singh Ji, the moral standard of SGPC had been declining with every election held. No religion of the world has accepted democratic method of elections for running its primary religious institute. For the management of Darul-Uloom. Our type of elections system does not exist at all.

When Hakeem-ul-Islam, Hazrat Maulana Mohammad Tayab Sahib, Vice Chancellor was asked how for over a century no discord in the running of this institute or grabbing of power in the management had taken place, he replied that unity and peace is only achieved by becoming a true worshipper of God. Nothing can be achieved by becoming a customary God worshipper. Every member of the management must essentially become a true devotee of *Allah*. Such discords result when people adopt self worship against *Allah* worship. This is the fundamental problem in our Sikh organisation. Instead of devotion to the divine cause and worship of *Akal Purakh,* we become devotees of the personalities, men who may matter in our life or are doing service for material gains. Our ego and false pride become causes of our disputes and differences.

The old man who founded this establishment could get only one student to teach. He was taught in the historic minaret of this place. In 1976, the annual budget of this institution was over 26 lakh rupees. The first year budget of this college was rupees six hundred and fifty only. Starting the institution with one student, it has now become an arena of 1504 missionary students. Although the city of Saharanpur has two other Muslim missionary institutes, but this extraordinary historic institute has its own brilliance and glory. This is one of the biggest institute among the Muslim missionary establishments of the world. The other compatible establishment is in Egypt.

Yet another amazing feature of this institute is that with an annual expenditure of over 26 lakh (1976 figure). This institute has never made an appeal for financial help before anyone. According the statement of Ghazi Sahib, the institute has ensured all through that no money is asked. There are over eighty Muslim countries in the world and each one is prepared and keen to extend financial help. Yet, the management of the institute discourages it. It does not even seek help from Government of India as well. Their basic ideology is so much caught by the pure Islamic preachings that they are not even prepared to earn money by the way of renting out shops and houses. They are in possession of area running into thousands of square yards. Probably, they may have assets more than the assets held by Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. The building of the college is very large but very simple to look at. So are the hostel buildings. There are houses for the College Staff but one does not come across any house or shop raised for letting out on rent for income. Ghazi Sahib is of the opinion that preaching can only be done with that money that has been donated with God and clean faith. We are standing on a totally different ground in this aspect. Raising of 26 lakh rupees and running this show amazes us on another account. Those who make donations do not bear a desire in their mind to be proclaimed as great donors – unlike some rich Sikh people. Unlike Sikh institutes which bear marble and granite slabs fixed on the floors and circumabulations of historic and non-historic *Gurudawaras* with the names

of donors engraved on it, no such tablet was observed fixed in any corner of the college. Ghazi Sahib rejected our argument very logically that only Sikhs are great donors of money for their religious institutions and the Muslims do not carry much sentiments. He said that India has many rich Muslims who are great donors. He even mentioned some monopoly business houses who are very rich. In essence, he made it clear that both poor and rich Muslims consider donation of money for missionary work as pious duty and do contribute according to their ability. These donors are above the desires of claiming fame as donors on the name of the *Allah*, nor do they claim political or social supremacy of these accounts. In these matters they are far ahead of the other nations and religions. Many other missionary establishments though not as good as Deoband, are operating in various provinces of India. Deoband shows no temperament of exhibitionism of the Muslim donors. Yet such large amount of money keeps pouring in without asking for it.

It is a matter of great appreciation for the college that it rose from one student to 1504 students, from an annual budget of rupees six hundred fifty to 26 lakhs. In all this progress, the institute had made no compromise on its principles, nor has gone for cheap fame and transient gains.

According to Ghazi Sahib, the institute in Egypt do accept financial assistance from various Muslim kingdoms. Its annual budget runs into crores. But on account of strict adherence to the principles, Deoband

College is considered much elite and respectful. Whatever religious literature is written for the purpose of preaching is printed in eighty four languages at the same time. We as Sikhs have ignored the practical implications of preaching. We feel satisfied just talking about preaching.

With their strong sentiment of working independently, this institution never thought of affiliating itself with any University. All the same, Aligarh, Jamia Milia Islamia and Kashmir Universties have rendered recognition to the College from their side. The Degrees and Certificates of Deoband have achieved recognition in many Islamic nations. Their teaching standard of Arabic language is so high that no one can distinguish between an Arab and a qualified student of Deoband. Ghazi Sahib narrated a very interesting fact. He said that if a person qualified from there sought a job in other Asian or African Muslim countries, they could get them easily but having undergone a missionary oriented course in a pure missionary environment for such a long period of time that fills their mind with preaching spirit, no one wishes to take up a job except undertaking religious work or missionary service. In such a long period of time, he develops tremendous love, devotion and liking for Islam that gives them deep desire to preach Islam.

The period of teaching of the entire course is 14 years. If a student has undergone some primary training in a similar course, it is reduced to eleven years. This course

enables the person to understand and know this religion. Due to long period of stay in one ideological environment, a climate of pure Islamic sentiments, the minds of the students are moulded in accordance with larger interests of Islam. There is no scope of development of adulterated thoughts. In the case of Sikh Missionary Colleges, where the entire training is done in two years, an effective missionary is hard to produce. Before his entry into the college, his mind has already acquired mixed views on various subjects. To wash off all ambiguities and replant right ideology and inculcate correct thought process is not only difficult but impossible in this short period of two years. That is one of the reasons why our so called missionaries, who had studied the same syllabus, in the same institution, often put the audience in a quandary on various matters. Understanding these inherent problems, we need to raise right type of colleges, draw out right type of syllabus and fix most appropriate period of training.

To what extent is the environment filled with Islamic sentiments is a matter to be seen, listened and felt. A huge map of the world is hung in the verandah of the Guest House. All the countries of the world are shown divided into three categories. First where Islam is the main religion. Second where Islam is fairly wide spread and thirdly where Islam has not yet made an entry. For the visitors and members of the institute, the following Urdu couplet is written to instill in their minds, their duties towards missionary work and preaching of their religion :

Waktey phursat hai kahan, kaam abhî bâkî hai.
Noorey tauheed kâ itmâm abhî bâkî hai.

Where are the spare moments? Much work is yet to be done. The spread of one divine light has yet to be done.

Alas ! Our well-wishers of *Panth* could gather some inspiration for *Gurmat* preaching and propagation from these words !

All the students of Darul**Uloom have to abide** by the discipline of the institute rigidly. Without discipline, a student cannot be moulded. Ghazi Sahib was questioned if some bad and ill-natured students also find entry in the institution, which may be ruining the climate of the college as is prevalent in our Ashrams. He replied that this establishment has done appropriate arrangements to check this malady. Those students who are incurable in some basic requirements and show no signs of progress in first two or three years maximum, are dismissed form the college by the principle. No recommendation of any political or financial world power can obtain his re-entry into the college. **(If we have an institute of such strict discipline, at least no principal will have to yield to the pressure of an illiterate for taking the student nor will he lose his job.)** So according to Ghazi Sahib, the institute purges all bad elements within two to three years of their entry.

It was amazing to learn from Ghazi Sahib that the trait of contentment and patience is practically implemented and taught in the college curriculum. The monthly pay of the high ranking officials like Vice Chancellor or Principal of the college is very marginal. Same professor can get five to six times more pay from outside in other Universities. But to fulfil his earnest desire for preaching of his religion and a spirit of sacrifice, he is prepared to accept less and feels contented with it. Ghazi Sahib disclosed that in 1939, he left a job worth Rs. 1500.00 a month and gladly took up the present assignment at Rs 35.00 only. He considered it his good fortune that he got this opportunity in this college. If the teacher has this spirit of sacrifice in him and he displays contentment in what he has, why would such virtues not be born in the students ?

We neither promote nor suggest that our missionaries should work on lesser pays and live substandard life. But any attitude of greed and materialistic gains is not befitting this profession and needs to be discarded.

The simplicity of the college is worth seeing. All students, teachers and management staff dress up very simply. A shirt and a pajama which mostly is above the ankles of the wearer, an ordinary footwear and a skull cap on the head. A *Kurta* and a *Tehmat* (a long cloth to cover the legs.) is also permitted. No one has any objection on this dress, which beside being simple, looks comic too. Keeping a

handful long beard with moustaches shaved clean give a very weird look to a man. But bravo to these people who are doing all this for keeping their religious discipline and simplicity in their life. The entire college had no table and no chair. Even the college staff operates sitting on the mats on the floor. They may use the steps as table where possible. Library and class room were no different. So much so that even principle Sahib was operating from the ground. He however had a big round pillow at his back. Ghazi Sahib said that students of rich and poor families are studying here, but all of them have to follow the laid down code of simplicity and discipline. It is an established fact that Muslims reign supreme in oil wells and oil trading. Some even own goldmines. A son of a goldmine owner of Johannesberg went through the entire course and lived life according to the norms of the college.

The college Library has about over one and a half lakh books. They have their own way of protecting and keeping them. The readers are provided with very peaceful atmosphere for studies.

No student is charged any fees by the college. Nearly 800 students are provided free food and dress. The teaching system is very free and open that does not impose unnecessary load on a student. He is given lots of free time. His psyche is so developed that he trusts in necessary hard work by his own will power. He is never chased around by any teacher.

All the people of the college are very particular of their prayers and praying timing. During the conversation, Ghazi Sahib also left for *Namaz* as soon as he heard the call to the faithfuls. One of our study group members said that the group had come from far off place and it should be his duty to gave us information that is being asked. He replied, "This task is not important than the prayer of *Allah*". To be so punctual of their code is indeed worthy of all appreciation.

On completion of the course, it becomes an obligation for every successful student to adopt the profession of an Islamic missionary and strive to do utmost in its spread. Many missionaries go to new towns and villages which have fair spread of Muslim population, where they raise a mosque and develop it into a preaching centre. According to Ghazi Sahib, over one lakh and three quarters missionaries were spreading the light of Islam in various countries of the world at that time.

The college is also conducting correspondence courses to train suitable persons as a programme of distant education.

It is not possible to adopt all points of an institution. Whatever is good and can fit into our curriculum should definitely be considered for adoption by the well-wishers of the *Panth,* if not in original form, at least after suitable

modification. We need to establish good missionary training institutes. Keeping the edict :

Jab lag khâlsâ rahai niârâ. Tab lag tej dîo mai sârâ.

of the Tenth Master always in mind, train missionaries those can arrest the decline in Sikhism as a result of ever increasing interference of the ruling majority directly and indirectly through such *Gurudawaras* run by the various cults and self proclaimed *Sants*. All well-wishers and *Panth* and missionaries must remember the following couplet of Muslim poet who understood the propagation of Brahmanism :

Woh deene hazâjî kâ bebâk berhâ,
Jo seehoon pe atkâ n jeehoon pe thehrâ.
Kee-ey pâr the jis ne saton samunder,
Woh doobâ dahâney mein Gangâ ke â kar.

ABOUT CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY WORK

Here are the views of Principle Harbhajan Singh, former Principal at Shaheed Sikh Missionary College Amritsar that he had written in his book 'Amrit te Atma' regarding preaching in Christianity :

The longing of preaching in the heart of Christian missionaries and their desire to spread Christianity is unparalleled in the history. They seem to have achieved miracle in the missionary field. The Bible has been translated in 1473 languages. It has been printed and distributed in crores. For translating it in *Nama* language of Africa, it took 142 years from 1825 to 1967. It is not just a matter of finance and means but is that of the love and enthusiasm of spreading their religion that rages like a tornado in their minds. For these tender matured preachers from cold countries to reach hot Africa and serve the orphans, destitute, handicaps and lepers, sacrificing their lives and youth is the key to their success.

The writer of these lines had an opportunity of visiting their Missionary College by the name of Papal Seminary in Pune. Seeing the place, my companions were rendered speechless and could not help

appreciating what we saw. From them preaching point of view, this was like *"Khâk râ che nisbat ast bâ âlim pâk."* This appreciation also brought a feeling of deep regret and distress in out minds in respect of preaching of Sikhism. And why should this feeling not have surfaced when the neighbours have succeeded in selling their electroplated goods at the rate of gold in the world market of religions and we fail miserably in selling twenty four carat gold moulded principles of Baba Nanak which are easy to follow, true in their practice, out and out meant for the good of mankind; even at the cost brass. Leave aside selling them, we have even been incapable of reaching the information regarding availability of mines of gems and diamonds with us. Who is the culprit of this unforgivable carelessness?

Let us talk about this missionary college a little more in brief.

Nearly one thousand students study in this Seminary. The entire duration of the training course is eight years. The first commitment that the student undertakes is that he will not get married so that they can undertake the preaching work uninterruptedly and with full attention all their life. Nearly two hundred students fully equipped with knowledge of other religions pass out from here every year. They are spreading in the Eastern and Southern part of

India. How many more such missionaries would be existing in the other countries can be assessed by the readers themselves. An event that took place with the writer would make an interesting reading beside being helpful to the teachers.

"On 27th August 1975, I was coming from Pune to Mumbai by Deccan Queen Express Train. I was going to deliver a lecture in "Jinnah Congress Hall" on the subject *'Why is Sikhism Dear to Me.'*

In my adjacent seat sat a young man of 30 years who was busy reading a Book. I was also busy going over various points of my lecture in my mind. Somehow the person under reference read the words "Religion of Man" written on my paper. Out of curiosity he asked me who I was and what did I do for my living?

After giving a brief introduction about myself, I asked him who he was, what profession he was in and why was he going to Mumbai. He said that he was a student of a Missionary College named De Noili College Pune. He was undergoing training of the member of the society of Jesus Religious Order. The details of the syllabus and period on each subject for becoming a missionary is as under –

1. Apprenticeship - 2 years
2. Study of Humanities - 2 years

3. Philosophy - 3 years
4. Teaching in school - 2 years
5. Secular Degree (M.A., M.Sc., B.Ed. M.Ed.) - 2 years
6. Theology - 3 years
7. Priesthood - 1 year

Thus the entire period of training is 14 years. He said that his name was Brother G.L. Rajindra S.J. He was from Kerala and his grandfather had adopted Christianity as a religion. He had taken a vow of celibacy for life and devoted all his time in missionary work.

He further disclosed that the girl of a Christian family of Mumbai where he had stayed earlier, was very adamant on marrying a Hindu boy and leaving Christianity. The head of the Pune institute had asked him to visit the family and speak with the girl, convincing her to give up her idea of changing her religion.

Isn't this isolated episode of the neighbouring religion but enough to shake us out of deep slumber and carelessness towards our own duties? Isn't their long period of missionary training commitment to celibacy, unshakeable faith in the words of Jesus and their tremendous Zeal and enthusiasm for missionary work

not a cogent example for our inspiration to take on our preaching work with equal vigour and verve? If success is kissing the feet of Christian missionaries at every venture, what is there to feel so amazed about?

Shall we ever be able to adopt such methods in our preachings system?

This is a bird eye view of the preaching menial efforts of two missionary based religion of the world. How menial are the efforts of Sikhism compared to these religions ? This truth does not need much explanation. Wherever we go and whomsoever we meet, we hear well-wishers saying that much preachings in *Malwa* and *Majha* areas, amongst the students, among the nomads who are devoted to Guru Nanak. It is needed in all the four cardinal directions.

Utterly confused and scared of this space age, a man is eagerly and impatiently awaiting for the divine soothing message of Guru Nanak that wishes well of everyone in this world. His eyes have become rigid and benumbed watching the earth and sky for that light to appear which will herald a new dawn in his life. And what are we? We have gone to sleep before even relating our story. And our deep slumber is enabling our own secret knowing dissenting groups to use our assets to their maximum advantages. Somewhere, the spurious *Nirankaris* of Delhi are robing the good name of Guru Nanak, Bibi Nanaki, Baba Budha Ji or

Bhai Gurdas Ji while at other place *Radha Soamis* are creating suspicions in *Gurbani* and misleading the gullible Sikhs. Many selfish, hungry for recognition, spurious, fake and evil-minded persons passing themselves as *Sant* are spreading apostasy in the name of *Gurmat.* These so-called respectable persons are busy adulterating the *Panth* accepted and SGPC published code of conduct with sourness of their own beliefs, distinct features and new inventions. Infact whichever way one looks, the Sikh structure and management is seen to be in a state of chaos. Our present condition is best described by the following couplet –

Ik châk ho to see looñ humdum garebân apnâ.
Zâlm ne pharh dâlâ hai yeh târ târ kar ke.

Wise pople say : 'Medicine must befit the ailment. Our neglect of the missionary efforts need major operation. Perhaps even 'Gurudawara Act' may also not escape from the surgical incision. However for the present, we confine our requirement to establishing a glorious preaching institute post haste that should become an icon for other religions to emulate. And before any blue print is drawn, key leaders, scholars, men of letters and genuine well-wishers must thoroughly study religious institute at Deoband, Pune, Gurukul Kangri and Kurukeshetra.

Distributing Sikh literature and life accounts of Satguru Ji's in various languages is an effective preaching

method. Much before such a literature is distributed, it is essential to prepare it through authentic and knowledgeable commentators. Establishing a few genuine and devoted missionary colleges for preparing honest, dedicated and enthusiastic preachers would not be a small service either. Such college should also be prepared to impart religious education to other members of the *Panth* beside preparing missionaries and *Kirtaneas*. Let this be a role model institution where the code of conduct of Sikhs is practically demonstrated, research work on Sikh history and Sikh philosophy is undertaken, where image building of Sikhs and Sikhism is undertaken.